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# General Assembly
Fifty-second Session

*Official Records*

**50**th plenary meeting
Thursday, 20 November 1997, 10 a.m.
New York

*President*: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . (Ukraine)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Statements on the occasion of the eighth Africa Industrialization Day**

**The President:** Before turning to the items on the agenda for this morning, I should like to remind the General Assembly that today is the eighth Africa Industrialization Day.

Since its proclamation by the General Assembly eight years ago, Africa Industrialization Day has been celebrated on 20 November. Today, it gives me great pleasure to join in the commemoration of this event.

What are we celebrating on Africa Industrialization Day? First, we are celebrating the valiant efforts of the peoples of Africa to achieve a better life for themselves through industrial development. Secondly, the celebration of this event serves as an important reminder of the need to draw world attention to the industrial development of Africa. Thirdly, Africa Industrialization Day symbolizes the solidarity of the international community with the countries in Africa. Above all, it reaffirms the principle of partnership and shared responsibility between Africa and the international community in the industrial development of the continent.

For many years, the United Nations has actively supported African countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth and development. The New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the Industrial Development Decade for Africa and the newly launched Alliance for Africa's Industrialization are some of the major programmes and initiatives that come to mind. Collectively, they underscore the commitment of the international community to Africa's development. An integral part of this commitment is the promotion and acceleration of Africa's industrial development. Based on the experience of the rich industrialized and the newly industrializing countries, there is increased recognition that industrialization holds the key to the transformation of Africa from poverty to prosperity.

The continuing decline of the industrial sector despite growing signs of economic recovery in many African countries has therefore been a cause for serious concern. As a consequence of the poor performance of the industrial sector, the share of sub-Saharan Africa in global manufacturing production has dropped from 0.6 per cent in 1970 to 0.3 per cent in 1995. The share of manufactured products in total African exports has barely changed over the last two decades and is still below 10 per cent. Moreover, four-fifths of sub-Saharan Africa's industrial production is classified as low-technology.

This disturbing trend has contributed to the widening industrialization and technological gap between Africa and the rest of the world. It has raised considerable concern about the ability of African industry to compete in a highly competitive global economic environment. Africa's leaders recognized the need to take collective

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and effective action to address this crucial challenge. In June of this year, the Assembly of African Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity decided in their Harare Declaration on African Industrialization to redouble their efforts to promote sustainable industrial development through private-sector-led strategies and new global partnerships. They endorsed the launching of the Alliance for Africa's Industrialization, supported by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), as the principal mechanism for promoting private-public sector partnerships within Africa as well as partnerships between African and non-African enterprises.

Given the prominence of the private sector in Africa's industrialization strategy, it is appropriate that the theme of this year's celebration of Africa Industrialization Day is "Development of Small and Medium Industries". The majority of industrial enterprises in Africa are small and medium-sized, but they account for a large share of jobs created in the economy.

Many are individual or family-owned business operations with great potential for adjusting rapidly to changing market conditions. With trade liberalization and deregulation, their role has increased in importance. They are increasingly becoming a dynamic force for the promotion of sustainable industrial development in Africa.

While the United Nations system has done much to support the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development, much more needs to be done. Organizations of the United Nations system need to work more closely together to encourage the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises in African countries. They need to intensify their efforts to help small African entrepreneurs gain access to markets, investments, credit, technology and training. In this connection, the contribution that the United Nations Industrial Development Organization has made over the years in facilitating enterprise-level cooperation between African and non-African business partners and in providing a range of technical support services to small enterprises, particularly those of women entrepreneurs, has been commendable.

The development activities of United Nations agencies in support of industrial development in Africa should be better harmonized. Resources available throughout the United Nations system for this purpose should be pooled to maximize the impact of the system's contributions to Africa's development. An important step in this direction is the incorporation of the industrial development objectives of African countries in the formulation of country strategy notes and in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

As we celebrate Africa Industrialization Day, we remind ourselves of the importance of taking a common approach to our common challenges. The development of Africa is our common challenge, requiring concerted and coordinated action on the part of the international community. Today's event provides a good opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to international cooperation and our steadfast support to Africa as it strives to fulfil its hopes and aspirations for a better future.

I call now on the Secretary-General.

**The Secretary-General:** We gather on Africa Industrialization Day to raise public awareness and harness international support — political, technical and financial — for Africa's industrial development. Industrial development is a key element of sustainable economic growth. It helps countries achieve important social objectives, such as jobs and equity. It creates opportunities for the integration of women. In rural areas, linked with agricultural development, it can help stem migration and relieve pressure on cities.

With industrial development, the continent can take decisive steps towards full-throttle competition in the globalized marketplace. But without it, as African leaders themselves declared last June in Harare, African economies will be condemned to persistent crisis, dependence on humanitarian relief and deepening poverty, despair and political unrest.

(*spoke in French*)

As we mark this eighth Africa Industrialization Day, hope is the watchword for much of the African continent. In 1996, for the first time in 20 years, Africa experienced growth exceeding 4 per cent. More and more countries are experiencing remarkable economic expansion. The private sector is beginning to play its role in powering the economy. Everywhere, civil society is creating the institutions it needs in order to be heard. Decision-makers are vigorously pursuing their programmes of political, economic and social reform. Good governance and its foundations — political legitimacy, a State based on the rule of law, and transparency in administration — are now the goals.

Notwithstanding what has been achieved, the results of African industry remain too meagre. Inadequate infrastructure; weak institutions; poorly adapted regulations and systems for stimulating the financial sphere; and the widening technological gap between developed and developed countries: these are obstacles that slow the industrialization of Africa. The continent therefore does not benefit as much as it could from the globalization and liberalization of trade, and it remains difficult for African countries to become fully integrated into the world economy.

(*spoke in English*)

This year's Africa Industrialization Day focuses on the development of small- and medium-scale industries. Such enterprises are the backbone of economic activity in Africa. They are a major source of livelihoods and income. In both the formal and the informal sectors, small entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in alleviating poverty and promoting economic progress. Increasingly at ease with new technologies and niche marketing, they can respond quickly to changes and new opportunities.

But small-scale industries need support from Governments and the international community. They require a favourable policy environment. They need to upgrade the skills of their workers, to improve the quality of their products, to find sources of financing and to gain market access. They need technology and the requisite physical infrastructure. They need partners: partners from within and beyond the region.

In this light, I welcome recent initiatives by Africa's development partners to promote trade and investment with African countries. The outcome of last month's high-level meeting on the least-developed countries, sponsored by the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the International Trade Centre, is very encouraging. With 33 out of 48 least-developed countries, Africa stands to benefit greatly from the integrated framework adopted in Geneva, especially the market access facilities that have been announced.

The Alliance for Africa's Industrialization, launched last year, is another important undertaking, in particular with respect to its focus on partnerships with the private sector.

The United Nations system — through the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa and other bodies — will continue to support such ventures. UNIDO, as the only specialized agency dealing with industrial development issues, is already promoting technical assistance to small- and medium-scale enterprises. As members know, I am committed to a strong UNIDO.

The work ahead will not be easy. There is donor fatigue towards Africa, and aid is declining. As we move forward, Africa's leaders must rise to the occasion. Their commitment — not only to getting the economic fundamentals right but to creating the broader conditions that will encourage investment and development — is of vital importance. Only then will African industry take off. Only then will Africa find the path to sustained prosperity.

For my part, I renew my pledge that the industrialization of Africa will remain one of the top priorities of the United Nations, and that I will continue to be a strong champion of African industrial development.

**Statement on the occasion of Universal Children's Day**

**The President:** I would like to remind members that in 1954 the United Nations General Assembly, at its ninth session, recommended in resolution 836 (IX) that all countries institute a Universal Children's Day, to be observed as a day of worldwide fraternity and understanding between children and of activity devoted to promoting the welfare of the world's children. The date of 20 November marks the anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly in 1959 of the Declaration on the Rights of the Child and the adoption in 1989 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The prominent English writer Charles Dickens said,

> "In the little world in which children have their existence, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt as injustice". [*Great Expectations*]

We should do our utmost to protect the young generation all over the world.

Let us remember the words of another English writer, John Ruskin:

> "Give a little love to a child, and you get a great deal back". [*The Crown of Wild Olives*]

I thank the Assembly for its attention, and I remind the Assembly that today, besides marking the occasion of Africa Industrialization Day, we also celebrate Universal Children's Day.

**Agenda item 17**

**Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments**

**(j) Appointment of a member of the Joint Inspection Unit**

**Note by the Secretary-General (A/52/110)**

**The President:** In connection with sub-item (j) of agenda item 17, a note by the Secretary-General has been circulated in document A/52/110.

As indicated in that document, the General Assembly is required, during the fifty-second session, to appoint a member to fill the vacancy in the Joint Inspection Unit that will arise from the expiration of the term of office on 31 December 1998 of Mr. Raul Quijano of Argentina.

As also indicated in that document, in accordance with article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the President of the General Assembly shall consult with Member States to draw up a list of countries — in this case, one country — which would be requested to propose a candidate for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

After holding the necessary consultations, I should like to communicate to the Assembly the following information received from the Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States: two countries — namely, Argentina and Colombia — have decided to present their candidatures for one vacancy from among the Latin American and Caribbean States.

I should like, in accordance with past practice, to consult with Member States through the procedure of holding an advisory vote by secret ballot to select from among the Latin American and Caribbean States one country, which would be requested to propose a candidate for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

Although this advisory vote would not be an election, we would follow the rules of procedure of the Assembly governing elections.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** In accordance with existing practice, the country receiving the greatest number of votes, and not less than a majority of the votes of those present and voting, shall be the country selected.

May I also take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** In accordance with rule 93 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, when only one person or member is to be elected and no candidate obtains in the first ballot the majority required, a second ballot shall be taken, which shall be restricted to the two candidates obtaining the largest number of votes. If in the second ballot the votes are equally divided, and a majority is required, the President shall decide between the candidates by drawing lots.

I take it that the Assembly also agrees to that procedure.

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** Before I request the Secretariat to distribute the ballot papers, I should like to remind members of the Assembly that we are now going to proceed to the selection of one country from among the Latin American and Caribbean States, which will be requested to propose a candidate to fill the vacancy in the Joint Inspection Unit. The Assembly is not — I repeat, not — appointing a member to the Joint Inspection Unit at this time. It is only selecting one country which will be requested to propose a candidate. Therefore, only the name of a country and not the name of an individual should appear on the ballot paper.

I should like to repeat the names of the two countries from among the Latin American and Caribbean States that decided to present their candidatures: Argentina and Colombia.

The ballot papers will now be distributed.

May I request representatives to use only those ballot papers.

May I further request members of the Assembly to write on the ballot paper the name of one State from among the Latin American and Caribbean States for which they wish to vote. A ballot paper containing more than one name from among the Latin American and Caribbean States will be declared invalid. Any ballots with the name of a State outside the relevant region or with the name of an individual shall not be counted at all.

*At the invitation of the President, Miss Kalnina (Latvia), Ms. Han (Singapore) and Mr. Muchanga (Zambia) acted as tellers.*

*A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

*The meeting was suspended at 10.50 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.*

**The President**: The result of the voting is as follows:

Latin American and Caribbean States

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of ballot papers: | 167 |
| Number of invalid ballots: | 3 |
| Number of valid ballots: | 164 |
| Abstentions: | 1 |
| Number of members voting: | 163 |
| Required simple majority: | 82 |
| Number of votes obtained: | |
| Colombia | 86 |
| Argentina | 77 |

**The President:** I thank members for their advice and assistance. I thank the tellers for their assistance.

In accordance with article 3, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, Colombia will be requested to submit the name of a candidate and a curriculum vitae highlighting the candidate's relevant qualifications for the task ahead.

After holding the appropriate consultations described in article 3, paragraph 2, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, including consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council and with the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, I will propose a qualified candidate to the Assembly for appointment to the Joint Inspection Unit.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (j) of agenda item 17.

**Agenda item 156** (*continued*)

**Towards a culture of peace**

**Note by the Secretary-General (A/52/292)**

**Draft resolution (A/52/L.4/Rev.1)**

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1.

*Mr. Jele (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

**Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh): It is a pleasure and an honour for Bangladesh to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1, on behalf of my delegation and all the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, as well as the new sponsors of this draft resolution: the Central African Republic, Chile, Jamaica, South Africa and Swaziland.

In this draft resolution, we propose some elements regarding a culture of peace. The basic thrust of the draft resolution is to have at the next session a draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace, and we are requesting the Secretary-General to submit one.

This draft is the outcome of intensive consultations with all interested delegations. In order to accommodate the concerns of other delegations, we have made amendments to the original draft contained in A/52/L.4, and those have been incorporated into this new text.

I will briefly mention those changes, but before that let me say that we, the sponsors, very strongly believe that the subject of a culture of peace is an important one that covers a broad area and deserves our attention at the highest level. With that in mind, we requested that this item be considered in plenary under a new and separate agenda item, and we hope that this will continue to be the case in coming sessions of the General Assembly as well.

This subject has attained a level of attention, importance and comprehensiveness that it is appropriate that it be dealt with by the apex body of the United Nations system, the General Assembly. We believe that it is the desire of the sponsors, and of all other delegations, that this be done similarly in the coming years.

In this revised text, we have added, in operative paragraph 2, the full text of a paragraph from last year's resolution on a culture of peace. In operative paragraph 3, subparagraph (c) has been added, regarding a presentation of the progress of projects within the framework of the project entitled "Towards a culture of peace".

Finally, in operative paragraph 4, we have requested that any comments made on a culture of peace or relevant issues at the just concluded session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) be included in the report submitted next year.

With these words, we would like to request that the draft resolution contained in A/52/L.4/Rev.1 be adopted by consensus.

**The Acting President**: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1.

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

**Mr. Jin Yongjian** (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I should like to inform members that should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1, the Secretary-General does not anticipate that any programme budget implications would arise.

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1, entitled "Culture of peace".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1?

*Draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1 was adopted* (resolution 52/13).

**The Acting President**: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of position. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Ms. Kirsch** (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Estonia, Poland and Norway also align themselves with this explanation of vote.

The member States of the European Union attach great importance to the concept of a culture of peace. The European Union participates actively in the transdisciplinary project on a culture of peace in the framework of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). I would like to reaffirm here the European Union's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights.

In recent weeks the member States of the European Union have carefully considered the language of the draft resolution, the revised version of which is before us. In a constructive and positive spirit, the European Union proposed a number of changes to the principal sponsors of this draft resolution. We thank the sponsors for having held informal consultations at our request, but we regret that an agreement on our most important proposals did not prove possible.

We would have preferred that the further consideration of the elements of the draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace contained in the report of the Director-General of UNESCO, submitted to the General Assembly in document A/52/292, take place within the framework of UNESCO. We will convey to the Director-General our ideas regarding his draft declaration and programme of action.

The European Union has nevertheless decided to join the consensus on draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1.

**Ms. Saiga** (Japan): The promotion of a culture of peace is an important task for the Member States of the United Nations if our common quest for peaceful coexistence is to succeed. It is only in a culture of peace which is rooted in social interaction and sharing, tolerance and respect for human rights, and a determination to lay and then maintain the foundation of democracy and freedom that it is possible to actualize the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and thus save future generations from living in terror and fear of violence. It is for this reason that my delegation joined in the consensus on draft resolution A/52/L.4/Rev.1.

When the General Assembly requests a report to be submitted, it expects that that report will genuinely reflect the views of the Secretary-General or of the organization to which the Secretary-General has assigned the task of preparing it. Much to our disappointment, this is not the case with the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in document A/52/292. That report, which

contains important elements such as a proposal to establish a special fund, was submitted to the Secretary-General without any prior consultation with the Executive Board of UNESCO. That failure to follow proper procedure was brought to the attention of the members of the Executive Board at its meeting last October.

My delegation would have liked a genuine discussion to have taken place within UNESCO before the report was submitted to the General Assembly so that it could benefit from the views of member States and, consequently, be received as a credible basis for future discussion. As this is not the case, my delegation is of the view that it is premature to proceed, in accordance with this year's resolution, to request the Secretary-General to submit a consolidated report containing a draft declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace.

My delegation is concerned that the draft declaration and programme of action will be prepared without any substantive discussion and on the basis of a report that does not properly reflect the views of the States members of UNESCO. Japan therefore expresses strong reservations with regard to paragraph 4 of the resolution, and it hopes that when the Secretary-General implements this year's resolution, in cooperation with the Director-General of UNESCO, the views of the States members of UNESCO will be properly reflected.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 156?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 28**

**Universal Congress on the Panama Canal**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/435 and Corr.1)**

**Mr. Boyd** (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The President of the Republic of Panama, Mr. Ernesto Pérez Balladares, invited the entities using the Canal, private-sector shipping concerns and the Governments interested in the use of the Canal to contribute ideas regarding the future of the Panama Canal at a gathering called the Universal Congress on the Panama Canal, which was held at Panama City from 7 to 10 September 1997.

President Pérez Balladares said

> "The purpose of the gathering was to gain a clear vision of what the waterway would be like following its transfer to Panama. The Canal users, accordingly, had an opportunity at that forum to provide input and to discuss what kind of waterway would best serve their interests in the coming decades. There can be no doubt that the transfer of the Panama Canal will stimulate a surge of entrepreneurial activity that will create new opportunities with the development of industrial zones, the tourist industry and the opening up of the real estate market along the Canal, in what used to be known as the Canal Zone."

In 1914 the gates to the Panama Canal were opened wide to the world. The Canal is 80 kilometres long, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, and was dug through the narrowest and lowest stretch of the mountainous isthmus that links North and South America. Its principal features are its two terminal ports, its three sets of twin locks, Gatún Lake and the Gaillard Cut, also known as the Culebra Cut.

The locks enable transiting vessels to go up and come down again. The Panama Canal is a fresh-water canal. In the Gatún Locks, vessels bound for the Pacific are lifted to the level of Gatún Lake, a height of 85 feet, while Atlantic-bound vessels are lowered to sea level. In Gamboa, the Panama Canal's route leaves the natural course of the Chagres River and enters the Gaillard Cut. The Gaillard Cut is man-made. It was excavated, dredged and blasted through the mountain range known as the Continental Cordillera. In its day, the digging of the Cut was the largest earth-moving projet ever attempted. Its extension reached 9 miles at its highest point, more than 320 feet above sea level. There are three levels of contiguous locks at Gatún. Ships able to traverse the Panama Canal locks can be up to 100 feet wide and 950 feet long. The locks are composed of pairs of imposing gates from 47 to 82 feet in height.

The Miraflores Locks mark the Pacific terminus of the Panama Canal. The two twin chambers of Miraflores Lake lead to the port of Balboa at sea level. Miraflores Lake, at an altitude of 54 feet, was created by damming the waters of the Rio Grande and Rio Cocolí.

Again, the Canal is a fresh-water canal. Every transit of any vessel through the Panama Canal creates a loss of 52 million gallons of water, which flow into the

oceans. Fortunately, more than 95 per cent of the merchant vessels now in service are in line with the Canal's parameters.

Panama's merchant marine ranks first in the world, and we are now planning a national maritime commission to bring together under a single body all the elements required by the new measures.

At this important Congress, the participants included representatives of chambers of commerce, export-import associations, port administrators, shipping agents, banks, insurance companies and all kinds of governmental agencies that deal with the transport aspects of foreign trade activities, as well as academic bodies. There were 65 speakers, while 345 representatives of the information media from 19 countries, as well as some 571 staff from the local media, covered the event.

Panama is very appreciative of the support given by Ambassador Edgar Camacho Omiste of Bolivia and Ambassador Pierre Lelong of Haiti to the initial idea of holding a Universal Congress on the Panama Canal. On 7 November 1995 and 24 October 1996, respectively, they spoke in favour of this idea on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. Similarly, here at the United Nations, we wish to acknowledge the support provided by Ambassador Victor Marrero of the United States, Mr. Jean-Michel Gaussot of France, Ambassador Fernando Enrique Petrella of Argentina and Mr. Emilio Izquierdo of Ecuador.

Both the European Union and the Government of Taiwan made substantial contributions to this meeting, taking into account the importance of the Canal for many countries, in particular those of South and Central America.

For the historical record, document A/52/347 contains the Declarations of the Eleventh Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Rio Group, which was held in Asunción, Paraguay, on 23 and 24 August 1997. Paragraph 25 of that document states,

> "We reaffirm the importance of the Universal Congress on the Panama Canal, to be held from 7 to 10 September 1997 as a forum open to the entire international community; this meeting should serve as a consultation mechanism for specifically examining the role which the Canal should play in the twenty-first century and the plans for expanding its services which the Government of Panama is promoting through the Board of Directors of the Panama Canal Authority. We also express our belief that the results of the Congress will contribute to the growth of world trade and to economic growth within the region and will promote international cooperation on the basis of the principle that the Interoceanic Panama Canal will be open, on an equal and strictly neutral basis, to all the world's users and economies."

At the Congress, Mr. Rodney Slater, Secretary of Transportation of the United States said:

> "This is a time of great joy for our region. [We have] an invaluable opportunity to build a community of nations. As President Clinton put it, 'We are partners, shoulder to shoulder at this moment in history'. The Panama Canal is a global asset. It is a vital transport artery recognized by all sailors as the best way in the world to save time."

Mr. Thomas F. McLarty, Adviser to the President of the United States and Special Envoy for the Americas, added,

> "In this changing world, which is also changing the lives of men and women of the hemisphere, millions of people are for the first time enjoying opportunities for growth under democratic Governments, with free markets and growing respect for human rights and for law. As an open route for commerce between the Americas, the Panama Canal will expand relations, serving as our crossroads. And it will continue to be a key to the successful economic growth of our peoples."

In the course of the meeting, Mr. Jorge E. Ritter, Minister for Canal Affairs, explained the transfer of jurisdiction over the management of the Canal. The laws and regulations of the United States that govern the Canal until 31 December 1999 will be replaced by Panamanian laws and regulations that have formed part of our country's Political Constitution since 1994. Those laws and regulations guarantee the type of agency that will be taking over from the United States. It will include an autonomous administrative and financial commission, and conditions for Canal workers will not be affected. The budget for this agency will be separate from the national budget, and the agency will guarantee that traffic in the Canal will not be interrupted for any reason.

Mr. Ritter also explained that the Treaty concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal envisages that tolls and tariffs for passage will be fair, reasonable, equitable and in line with the principles of international law. This ensures that there will never be exorbitant increases in tolls by Panama. All this was also reaffirmed by our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ricardo Alberto Arias.

The Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, Mr. César Gaviria, talking about the transition and the domestic growth produced by the use of the Canal, said that some impressive figures were being achieved. He announced that trade between Latin America and the Caribbean had grown by 20 per cent and that trade between Latin America and the United States had grown by 12 per cent. He added that the volume of trade by Latin America was increasing by 12 per cent per year.

The Congress bore ample witness to the fact that the seafaring world recognizes the stability of the Panama Canal and that international maritime organizations are confident they can depend on the security of the Canal.

Mr. Alberto Alemán Zubieta, Administrator of the Panama Canal Commission, stressed the Canal's neutrality as one of its fundamental aspects, along with other aspects such as its competitiveness, the need to pursue an appropriate financial policy and the modernization of the Canal's locks using new technology and equipment. As to the possibility of building a third set of locks in 2010, the Administrator said that

> "for a decision of this magnitude we will have to carry out an appropriate engineering study".

In years past a tripartite commission, made up of Japan, the United States and Panama, had already undertaken studies with Panama regarding possible alternatives for the future of the Canal.

The gathering held in Panama studied major issues, such as the importance of the Canal; the Canal's capacity for meeting future requirements; alternative approaches to resolving problems of size and capability; the project for the third set of locks; the Canal's competitiveness; alternative routes for the Canal; the need to keep the tolls and service charges as low as possible; the effects of toll increases on future Canal usage; privatizing operations as a way of reducing costs and increasing efficiency; operating the Canal in accordance with sound business principles; avoiding domestic political interference in order to maintain the stability of the staff; toll policies consistent with the aim of making the Canal a magnet for the development of the maritime sector and other branches of the Panamanian economy; the need to carry out studies to yield recommendations on fair toll levels; other options for the Canal; conservation of the Canal basin; prospects for the future; the importance of a consultative committee of users to act as an advisory board of the Panama Canal Authority; changes in the regulations related to conservation measures and systems; transit costs for cruise ships; and the need always to consider the rights of the users.

There was consensus among the participants that Panama does have the human and technical capital to manage, operate and efficiently maintain the Canal after it reverts to the country in 1999. According to official statistics, 82 per cent of the 8,500 workers on the waterway are Panamanians. Of 324 management positions, 148 are held by Panamanians in the operational units and the naval, engineering and construction front offices.

The Congress provided a superb and unique opportunity for representatives of the merchant marine industry and collateral fields to describe to future interested parties how the Panama Canal works and thus give them a complete understanding of what lies ahead for the Canal. The Government of the Republic of Panama is in earnest in declaring its desire to remain a key player in the world maritime industry beyond the year 2000.

In Panama's view, the Congress came to a close having attained its chief objective of demonstrating to the international community that the Republic of Panama is prepared to assume control of the Panama Canal, as stipulated in the treaties signed between the United States of America and Panama on 7 September 1977. These were coined the Torrijos-Carter treaties by my illustrious predecessor, Mr. Jorge E. Illueca, and by Mr. Fernando Manfredo, High Commissioner of the Republic of Panama to the Universal Congress on the Panama Canal, who worked long and hard to bring the task to a happy culmination.

Panamanian leaders have always believed that the Panama Canal is destined to provide an international, neutral and non-discriminatory public service and that, accordingly, its uninterrupted and efficient operation is of special interest to such organizations as the United

Nations. That is the main reason behind our introduction of this brief report.

**The Acting President:** May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 28?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 32**

**Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/462)**

**Draft resolution (A/52/L.24/Rev.1)**

**The Acting President:** I give the floor to the representative of Sou.h Africa to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.24/Rev.1.

**Mr. Bergh** (South Africa): It is indeed an honour for South Africa to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic", contained in document A/52/L.24, on behalf of States members of the zone. The draft is the result of intensive consultations held with States Members of the United Nations.

The objectives of the zone include the enhancement of peace and security; the promotion of regional cooperation for social and economic development; the promotion of environmental conservation; and the sustained management of natural resources, and are being actively pursued by every member State.

Apart from peace, security and the mutual protection of the environment, each member State has definitive further benefits to be derived from its association with the region. These include the promotion of intraregional tourism, communication, technology and information exchange, and of shipping and other transport links.

I wish to cite one positive example in this respect. A resolution on the zone of peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic — submitted by South Africa as Chair of the zone and cosponsored by all zone States with Permanent Missions in Vienna — was adopted at the fortieth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which was held in March 1997 in Vienna. The resolution calls for the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to examine forms of assistance which could be extended to the States members of the zone and for the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to report on progress to the Commission at its forty-second session in 1998. The resolution was sponsored by Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Nigeria, Angola and Namibia and received the endorsement of the African Group.

One of the zone's principle objectives is to promote and encourage democratic principles, good governance and the rule of law and to defend all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The region has made several contributions towards peace and security within its broader area and it fully realizes that the preservation of peace and security in the region will forever remain one of the member States' most important joint responsibilities.

For example, the members of the zone have been involved, both in a bilateral as well as a multilateral context, in attempts to achieve a positive outcome to the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. On a regular basis, the zone has reaffirmed its willingness to contribute towards achieving lasting peace in Angola. Circumstances in Sierra Leone and Liberia have also demanded the attention of zone member States, and the situation in each of them has been under constant scrutiny.

The zone has readily accepted the challenges posed by the new global agenda. The region's constant focus on democracy, good governance, peace, security and nuclear disarmament; its undertaking to take responsibility for the proper and responsible management of the environment, the protection of fish and other marine resources; cultural and technology exchanges; and economic cooperation and respect for human rights all stand to prove that the zone is successfully dealing with a changing global environment.

Another challenge for the countries of the zone lies in the multilateral arena. This is to develop more coherent strategies to engage issues of mutual importance through a process of dialogue. The zone offers a unique possibility to create such instruments for dialogue and exchange of expertise, both on a bilateral and on a multilateral level.

The South African Mission wishes to express its gratitude to States members of the various regional groups for their suggestions in drafting this draft resolution, which in its amended form should once again

provide us with the necessary consensus text. We therefore urge all Member States to support the draft resolution, so that it may be adopted without a vote.

**Ms. Ramírez** (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is with satisfaction that I am speaking today on agenda item 32, entitled "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic", to support an initiative which opens up interesting prospects for us in the area of international cooperation.

I would likewise like to express the appreciation of the Government of Argentina to South Africa for its important contributions to and quite outstanding coordination of the work of the zone during 1996 and 1997.

Eleven years have already gone by since the General Assembly adopted resolution 41/11 in 1986, in which it solemnly declared the region of the Atlantic Ocean, in the region between Africa and South America, the "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic". The zone was born as an area for promoting understanding and improving cooperation among the countries of the South Atlantic.

As stated in the Brasilia and Somerset West Declarations, my country attaches particular significance to fundamental concepts such as democracy and political pluralism and respect for and defence of human rights and individual freedoms. We believe that these concepts are basic elements which form the basis of the purposes and principles of this initiative.

My delegation is pleased to note that we have made steady progress towards the objectives which brought about the creation of the zone. Its member States have already held four high-level meetings, during which they examined the various fields open to cooperation during this initial stage and adopted decisions and declarations with a vision of the future.

The member States have set themselves clear objectives in fundamental areas: the strengthening of peace and security; the promotion of regional cooperation in the area of economic and social development; the protection of the marine environment; and the conservation of resources.

With regard to the first of these objectives, Argentina believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute significantly to international peace and security by continuing to restrict the areas where the use or threat of use of such weapons takes place. The countries that belong to the zone believe in the need for all the zones which have been declared free of nuclear weapons to be consolidated.

Likewise, the Republic of Argentina firmly believes in the need to preserve the marine environment, as well as its living resources, and is pleased that this view is becoming increasingly widespread throughout the international community in general and in the countries of the South Atlantic zone in particular.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning the importance of the standards adopted in the context of the International Maritime Organization, which seek to preserve the marine environment from the spills and wastes associated with shipping, and the 1995 Agreement on the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.

Another issue which my delegation wishes to draw to the General Assembly's attention has to do with the transport of irradiated nuclear fuel, plutonium and high-level radioactive wastes. In this regard, I would like to place on record the concern felt by the Republic of Argentina — which is surely shared by the other countries of the zone — at the risks inherent in the passage of ships carrying radioactive wastes through the South Atlantic.

Likewise, we favour the adoption in the waters subject to our jurisdiction of measures recognized by international law aimed at safeguarding the health of our populations and marine systems. We believe in the need to strengthen international regulation in this area.

With regard to the fight against drug trafficking and the crimes associated with it, we reiterate our constant readiness to cooperate in achieving the goals of the South Atlantic zone, in line with the Somerset West Declaration. As hosts of the fifth high-level meeting, to be held next year, we trust that we will be able to make progress in the consideration of some of the issues related to cooperation on drugs that will have concrete effects in the context of the zone.

I would like once again to reaffirm that the Republic of Argentina shares in the call made annually to all States by the members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic to cooperate in promoting its objectives and to refrain from any action inconsistent with those objectives, particularly action which may

create or aggravate situations of tension and potential conflict in the region. The Republic of Argentina extends that call so that — in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the Organization — all States not only prevent conflicts but also commit themselves to the peaceful quest, through negotiation, for the lasting and just settlement of disputes pending in the region.

The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic is an arena where its members have found the opportunity to express their solidarity and determination to cooperate on the basis of essential universal principles, such as the promotion of democracy and political pluralism and the advancement of human rights and fundamental liberties, in the conviction that this will bring us closer to the ideals which bind the international community. In this setting, we likewise trust that economic and commercial ties across our common ocean will be significantly expanded in these favourable circumstances.

Finally, I would like to reiterate our satisfaction and commitment as we prepare to serve as host to the fifth high-level meeting of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic in 1998, an event which we hope will lead to the advancement of the principles and objectives which prompted us to establish the zone.

**Mr. Amehou** (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): In establishing the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic by resolution 41/11 of 27 October 1986, the General Assembly had among its objectives the promotion of peace and security in the zone and the strengthening of development cooperation between the countries of Africa and South America.

The member countries of the zone have worked towards the progressive achievement of these objectives for more than 10 years through their successive meetings in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1986, in Abuja (Nigeria) in 1990, in Brasilia (Brazil) in 1994 and in Somerset West (South Africa) last year. The course thus charted demonstrates the determination of the countries of the zone to make it a genuine instrument for the promotion of peace and a dynamic institution of South-South cooperation.

Benin therefore welcomes the progress achieved, especially the objectives attained since the holding of the fourth meeting of member States of the zone in Somerset West in April 1996.

In this connection, the positive developments in the situation in Liberia are a source of satisfaction for the delegation of Benin. Indeed, thanks to the determined action undertaken by the countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with the support of the international community, the very long and devastating war in Liberia — a country which is a member of the zone — came to an end with the holding of presidential and legislative elections on 19 July 1997.

Our hope is that, with the support of the countries of the zone and the United Nations, the current efforts to restore peace — particularly in Sierra Leone — will succeed as soon as possible.

In this connection, Benin commends the full support that the Security Council has given to ECOWAS to resolve the crisis in Sierra Leone and restore the democratically elected Government. The Government of Benin invites all parties concerned to work towards the effective and speedy implementation of the peace plan agreed to at Conakry on 23 October 1997.

The maintenance of peace and stability in the South Atlantic calls for the promotion of disarmament and the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime for small arms and weapons of mass destruction throughout the zone. To this end, the denuclearization of the South Atlantic must remain a priority objective for the countries of the zone. In that connection, we must work together to strengthen measures for a complete ban on nuclear weapons in the South Atlantic through the implementation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which has made Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Today, on the threshold of the third millennium and faced with the numerous challenges arising out of the phenomenon of globalization at the national and international levels, Benin considers that the time has come for the countries of the zone to strengthen their efforts so as to reap greater benefit from the many economic and commercial opportunities offered by the zone. We must also strengthen our cooperation in environmental protection and in activities aimed at combating drug trafficking throughout the region.

The fifth meeting of States members of the zone, to be held in 1998 and which Argentina has offered to host, must be the forum for determining ways and means of achieving those objectives. My country will spare no

effort in contributing to the implementation of such initiatives.

**Mr. Ayewah** (Nigeria): In contributing to the debate on the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, the Nigerian delegation wishes to express its appreciation to States Members of the United Nations and to the international community at large for their continued support of the zone as a forum designed to further cooperation among countries of the South in their pursuit of peace and development.

In confronting the issues of peace and security, member States of the zone have equally brought to the fore problems associated with crisis management and conflict resolution. It is in this connection that one must advert to the difficult situations in a number of countries members of the zone. Some of these difficult situations have found solutions, while others have proved intractable. Liberia is an example of those crisis situations that have found a solution — albeit after a protracted effort. Today, Liberia can be described as a success story. But on the other side of the coin is the continuing crisis in Angola. Regrettably, Sierra Leone and the Congo have joined the list of intractable circumstances that need the collaborative efforts of the international community in order to find durable solutions to the problems besetting the two countries.

The member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) took the bull by the horns and, with the support of the international community, succeeded in solving the Liberian problem. We look forward to similar cooperation in relation to the solution of the problem in Sierra Leone in order to reinstate President Kabbah and restore constitutional order to that country. In this regard we commend the initiative of ECOWAS and the action of the Security Council for the embargo which the latter imposed in its resolution 1132 (1997) of 8 October 1997 on the sale and supply of petroleum and petroleum products, and arms and related *matériel* of all types, to Sierra Leone, along with other measures. We also look forward to a hitch-free implementation of the peace plan agreed in Conakry on 23 October between the ECOWAS Committee of Five on Sierra Leone and representatives of the junta. We are, of course, glad that the peace plan has been accepted by President Kabbah himself.

It is appropriate at this point to reiterate the need for the provision and distribution of humanitarian assistance in response to local needs in that particular country. It is equally important that all States and relevant international organizations continue to assist those countries that have to grapple with the influx of refugees and displaced persons as a result of the crisis in Sierra Leone.

Along with other members of the international community, Nigeria welcomes the return of stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has great implications for broader subregional peace, security and development. We regret, however, that the Security Council has not been more forthcoming with regard to the situation in the neighbouring Republic of the Congo. The crisis in that country has resulted in the displacement of over two thirds of the residents of Brazzaville and in the extensive destruction of the city's infrastructure. The crisis has been further complicated by the involvement of external forces. We can only plead that all concerned pursue the logic of peace. In this regard, we commend the mediatory role of Gabon and other countries in the region for their efforts in favour of peace in the subregion.

One of the expressed desires of the members of the zone is for the South Atlantic to be free of nuclear weapons. The conclusion of the Treaty of Pelindaba, taken with the authority of the already established Treaty of Tlatelolco, will, when they both come into full operation, move us towards the realization of that goal. These two nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, together with the treaties of Raratonga and Bangkok and the Antarctic Treaty, are turning almost half of the globe into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This is a welcome development. In order to maintain that state of play, we call upon the nuclear-weapon States in particular to respect that status as well as the desire of the inhabitants of the southern hemisphere to keep the threat of nuclear weapons out of their horizon, out of their territories and out of their future.

Argentina has offered to host the fifth meeting of the zone in Buenos Aires in 1998. We are heartened by this offer, as it will afford us the opportunity to follow up on the different projects either envisaged or decided upon at the fourth high-level meeting of the zone in Somerset West, South Africa. These include cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and protection of the marine environment for the conservation of marine resources.

Another area of cooperation on which progress has been made in recent times — aside from trade and the sharing of industrial expertise and experience — is the effort to prohibit the dumping of radioactive and hazardous wastes. We welcome the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and

on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Together with other prohibition agreements that have been signed and the annual consensus resolutions that have been recommended by various General Assembly committees and adopted by the Assembly on the prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes and on the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes, this development has helped to establish accepted international norms on the subject.

As we look forward to the next high-level meeting of the zone, to be held in Buenos Aires in 1998, we wish to express appreciation to the Government of South Africa for hosting the fourth meeting of the members of the zone. We would also like to thank the South African delegation, as well as other members of the bureau of the Permanent Committee of the zone in New York, for their coordination efforts, including the preparation of this year's draft resolution, which is contained in document A/52/L.24/Rev.1.

In concluding, we wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/52/462. We also thank the United Nations agencies which have taken action in fulfilment of the various mandates given to them in resolution 51/19 of 1996.

**Mr. Felicio** (Brazil): The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic is of great importance to Brazil. Our country had the honour to host two of the ministerial meetings of the members of the zone, the first in Rio de Janeiro in 1986, and the second in Brasilia in 1994. Brazil was present at the meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, in 1990, and took part in the fourth ministerial meeting, held in Somerset West, South Africa, in 1996. We look forward to the meeting to be held in Argentina next year.

The countries of Africa and South America on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean have taken the initiative to build a bridge of understanding across that vast expanse of sea between our shores. The aim is to foster mutual knowledge, increase cooperation, give new life to old ties, search for solutions to common problems, learn from each other's experiences and, where possible, act together in shaping a common future.

The near completion of the process of decolonization made it possible for the South Atlantic countries to establish closer political and economic relations and to further the endeavour of working towards more effective ways to build peace and prosperity. The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic is an attempt in that direction that is gradually becoming an invaluable instrument to both African and South American countries.

The initiatives undertaken in the areas of protection of the marine environment, trade and economic competitiveness, cooperation against drug trafficking and prohibition of nuclear weapons point to priority areas where the States members of the zone wish to undertake join action, and where they expect the support of the international community.

All members of the zone are parties to nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties — the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty for Africa (Treaty of Pelindaba) — and are seeking to strengthen the links of cooperation with the other nuclear-weapon-free zones of the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas, established by the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Raratonga) and the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Bangkok).

With the aim of assuring protection of the marine environment, especially the conservation of marine living resources and the prevention and containment of environmental accidents, the countries of the zone have started to exchange relevant information. This exercise should continue. In this context, the navies of some member States of the zone have been developing efforts to improve their capacity to work together.

Brazil has also sought to improve ways and means of cooperating with other members of the zone in the combat against the traffic in illicit drugs, a growing problem on the two sides of the Atlantic, and member countries have started to coordinate their activities in multilateral forums.

Another important area for the member countries of the zone is the promotion of democracy, political pluralism and national reconciliation. The draft resolution introduced today makes reference to developments in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Angola since last year and calls for increased humanitarian assistance for Liberia and Angola.

The Brazilian Government, within the limits of its resources, is committed to continued cooperation with other South Atlantic countries in all the areas I have mentioned. For the member countries of the zone, the approval of this draft resolution by the General Assembly

is an invaluable expression of the international community's support for peace and security, for cooperation and for economic and social development in a democratic environment, as expressed in the Final Declaration of the fourth meeting of the States members of the zone.

The African and South American countries members of the zone of peace and cooperation aim at erecting building blocks of cooperation, understanding, stability and prosperity. The Southern Cone Common Market, the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of West African States are organizations that overlap with the zone and reinforce it. We are confident that, like similar texts in previous years, draft resolution A/52/L.24/Rev.1, which was introduced by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the States members of the zone, will receive general support.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/52/L.24/Rev.1.

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/52/L.24/Rev.1, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal have become sponsors of the draft resolution.

A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

*Against:*

None

*Abstaining:*

United States of America

*The draft resolution was adopted by 157 votes to none, with 1 abstention* (resolution 52/14).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Andorra, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary and Uruguay informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

**The Acting President:** I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Richier** (France) (*interpretation from French*): France, with its partners in the European Union, voted in favour of the draft resolution. It gives its full support in particular to the paragraphs relating to Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

In this context, France wishes, nevertheless, to recall its traditional reservations as to the concept of zones of peace in general. I would particularly cite the geographical limits of such zones, the nature of the obligations upon States and respect for international law, particularly the law of the sea.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 32?

*It was so decided.*

**Agenda item 12**

**Report of the Economic and Social Council**

**Draft resolutions (A/52/L.15, L.18, L.21, L.22)**

**The Acting President:** I call on the representative of Côte d'Ivoire to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.15.

**Mr. Bamba** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.15, entitled "Proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace", on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Brazil, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, the Comoros, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Niger, Panama, Peru, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Zimbabwe and Côte d'Ivoire. I must add that a number of other sponsors are to be included in the list, but for technical reasons their names do not appear in document A/52/L.15. The additional sponsors are Bhutan, the Dominican Republic, Georgia, Guyana, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nicaragua and Turkmenistan.

The Assembly will recall that the Economic and Social Council, on a proposal of Côte d'Ivoire with which some 30 other States associated themselves, adopted at its substantive session held in July 1997 in Geneva resolution 1997/47 recommending that the General Assembly, at its fifty-second session, proclaim the year 2000 the International Year for the Culture of Peace. Now, to follow up on that recommendation of the Council, the Assembly has before it this morning draft resolution A/52/L.15.

Among the key ideas that led to the creation of the United Nations, one must quite rightly give pride of place to the idea of a culture of peace, as contained in the preamble to the Charter, reflecting the determination of the peoples of the world, having emerged from two world conflicts

> "to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours".

We can thus see the concept of the culture of peace thus finds its source in the values and aspirations underpinning the foundation of the universal Organization that was created — and we can never repeat it often enough —

> "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

By and large, the idea of the culture of peace rests essentially on the repudiation of violence. It invokes all the values, attitudes and behaviours reflecting and furthering tolerance and solidarity. Its foundations are the principles of liberty, justice and democracy. The idea of the culture of peace seeks, lastly, to prevent conflicts at their source and to resolve problems through dialogue and negotiation.

The logic of mistrust and confrontation that characterized the cold war period frustrated the full expression of the culture of peace. Paradoxically, however, the end of the cold war, although bringing with it a multitude of beneficial changes — notably, in relations among countries — has not after all prevented the proliferation of explosions of violence, such as we have witnessed in numerous inter-ethnic conflicts in recent years.

The reality of this end of the century is all too full of scenes of armed conflict, civil war, genocide and wandering masses of refugees and displaced persons fleeing massacres. All this calls out to conscience and places the international community face to face with its responsibility in this arena.

With respect to this situation, we should in all honesty recognize the proven capability of the United Nations to manage crisis situations, as shown by its many successes in many different peacekeeping operations.

Decisive United Nations action in these situations has contributed to saving many human lives, which gives us enormous satisfaction, and we hope that everything possible will be done to enhance the United Nations

capability in the fields of peacekeeping, preventive action and emergency humanitarian assistance.

Nevertheless, we note that the specific timing of peacekeeping operations, inasmuch as they are always rapid responses to emergencies, restricts their long-term scope. As a result, they must necessarily be complemented by in-depth activities, especially educational activities, aimed at inculcating a culture of peace in the societies in question. Substantive work is therefore required so that the structures and institutional manifestations of war, and their deeper roots — namely, the culture of violence and war — can be transformed into a culture of peace.

The following extract from the preamble to the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), reflects precisely this same concern in affirming that

> "since wars began in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

The transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace seems to us, therefore, to be the essential backdrop to all United Nations activities in dealing with the numerous challenges emerging on the horizon of the new millennium.

It is fitting here to pay a resounding tribute to UNESCO, which, under the dynamic leadership of its Director-General has set, as a priority goal for its work, raising awareness to promote the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace. But in the final analysis, it is up to all of us, large and small nations alike, each at its own level and pace, to work jointly to accomplish this lofty undertaking that can only foster tolerance, solidarity and harmony between peoples and between nations.

It is in this spirit that Côte d'Ivoire initiated draft resolution A/52/L.15, recommending to the General Assembly the proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace. We consider the choice of the year 2000 to be of fundamental importance in launching the promotion of the culture of peace at a global level.

The aim is to harness the symbolism inherent in the year 2000, as it is an emblem of, *inter alia*, ideas of renewal and hope for a more peaceful world. The year 2000 must help us reinvent peace. The beginning of the millennium should therefore be marked by a mobilization of national and international public opinion, directed particularly towards young people, inviting them to make a difference and encouraging them to break once and for all with the behaviour patterns and attitudes of the recent and the more distant past, characterized by crises, wars and violence.

We remain convinced that launching an International Year for the Culture of Peace at the turn of the millennium can only help stimulate efforts by individuals, as well as by the international community, aimed at creating and promoting a culture of peace in people's minds, beginning with the next century.

The proclamation of an International Year for the Culture of Peace is intended as a force for raising public awareness, at the dawn of the new millennium, of the need for a culture of peace in the daily life of societies, with particular attention to young people.

The programme for and the financing of activities marking the celebration of the International Year for the Culture of Peace are in keeping with the guidelines adopted by the General Assembly. Indeed, UNESCO intends to take the necessary steps to coordinate a programme of activities that will be financed entirely by voluntary contributions.

In taking the initiative of introducing draft resolution A/52/L.15, Côte d'Ivoire retains the image that the entire world has of it, as a country of peace, tolerance, solidarity and shared happiness. The history of our young nation, fashioned by the enlightened vision of the father of modern Côte d'Ivoire, the late President Houphouet-Boigny, has been a happy succession of victories for peace that have inevitably given rise to prosperity. Since 1989 Côte d'Ivoire has marked 15 November as a day for the celebration of peace.

This pact with peace and progress is continuing harmoniously under President Henri Konan Bédié, who is furthermore sparing no effort in advancing democracy and a state of law through the constant practice of dialogue and consultation. The faithful commitment of Côte d'Ivoire to the culture of peace was brilliantly reaffirmed recently by President Henri Konan Bédié in a speech given on 23 March in Bamako, Mali, on the occasion of the Week of Peace, when he declared:

> "For the Ivoirian, peace is a second religion. It is the most precious good that President Houphouet-Boigny bequeathed to us. In Côte d'Ivoire we think

of peace as something patiently constructed out of love for others, tolerance, justice and a common striving for development, all of which are propelled by constant dialogue and the quest for compromise. Our philosophy and our political practice, our actions and our energies, are all centred on the continuous and persistent search for peace through dialogue."

In 1989 the international dimension of peace was enshrined in Côte d'Ivoire with UNESCO's creation of the international Houphouet-Boigny Prize, awarded each year to

"honour people, institutions or organizations that have significantly contributed to promoting, seeking, safeguarding or maintaining peace."

This prize was awarded for the first time in 1991, to Presidents Nelson Mandela and Frederik de Klerk. They were followed in 1992 by The Hague Academy of International Law. The late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, President Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Shimon Peres were honoured in 1993, King Juan Carlos of Spain and President Jimmy Carter of the United States in 1994, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 1995. Most recently, in 1997, it was awarded to President Alvaro Arzú Irigoyen of Guatemala and Commander Rolando Morán, head of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), both of whom deserve credit for agreeing to put an end to 36 years of civil war in Guatemala.

We are delighted to note, as the report of the Secretary-General in document A/52/292 points out, that the culture of peace is being implemented by many other countries throughout the world. I need mention only a few of the many examples.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, ministerial-level meetings, seminars and training sessions have been organized by UNESCO on issues relating to human rights, democracy, peace and development. The culture of peace has already been introduced in university curriculums in the Caribbean. A mayors' prize for peace was awarded for the first time in the Caribbean and Latin America at the international congress on cities and education for the culture of peace, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in September 1996. The prize was awarded to Mrs. Gloria Cuertas Montoya, mayor of the city of Apartadó, Colombia.

Activities designed to promote the culture of peace are being undertaken by countries throughout Asia and the Pacific with the assistance of UNESCO, furthering tolerance, dialogue among cultures and cultural diversity.

In Africa, programmes targeting the culture of peace have been implemented for the demobilized military forces in Mozambique, Rwanda and other countries that have returned to peace after years of war. The teaching of this subject at schools and universities is also taking place in Zimbabwe, Namibia and Mozambique.

With regard to Mozambique, a country that has known the torments of civil war, it is particularly interesting to note the importance that that country attaches to the culture of peace, as is evident from the following extract from the statement of the President of Mozambique, Mr. Joaquim Alberto Chissano, to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session on 22 October:

(*spoke in English*)

"We believe that the promotion and further consolidation of a culture of peace should be the next most important challenge to all societies as well as to each individual citizen." [*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second session, Plenary Meetings*, 35th meeting, p. 2]

(*spoke in French*)

Peace, democracy and development are, today more than ever, crucial and indispensable elements for human development within a society committed to progress. Peace, democracy and development form an interactive triangle that gains its vitality from the culture of peace.

But peace remains a constant quest, a long-term endeavour that requires daily effort. We thus prepare for peace through a long process that takes into account all generations in society: by training children so that they can internalize and accept the values of peace; by re-educating adults so that they learn anew to accept racial differences, respect cultural diversity and live with tolerance; and by inviting the elderly to reach out in forgiveness and reconciliation, especially when the memory of the past is still alive.

We are on the eve of a new millennium. Globalization and the worldwide spread of all we do are

accelerating thanks to the extraordinary progress of science and technology and their dissemination.

The world is changing and we must adopt new behaviour patterns. We must resolutely turn our backs on the ordeals, horrors and errors of the past. We need to look to the future with confidence and to see to it that the twenty-first century is one of non-violence, peace, democracy, progress for all and shared happiness. That is why we must now move to give the culture of peace a chance.

I therefore hope that the General Assembly will adopt draft resolution A/52/L.15, entitled "Proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace", without a vote.

**The Acting President:** I call on the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.18.

**Ms. Ramírez** (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.18, entitled "Year 2000: International Year of Thanksgiving", which is sponsored by Bangladesh, Brazil, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Kyrgyzstan, the Marshall Islands, Nicaragua, Paraguay, the Philippines, Swaziland, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela as well as my own country, Argentina.

The sponsors of this initiative consider that it makes a contribution of the most far-reaching importance in order to give real meaning and depth to the concept of gratitude, and to lead us to reflect on how to develop and stimulate all those actions that contribute to understanding and national reconciliation.

The Republic of Argentina welcomes this initiative with particular interest as it shares in the concern about the situation that mankind is experiencing today, particularly the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. This situation has prompted our country to work actively in the international arena in areas afflicted by natural disasters, regional conflicts or other emergencies.

We live in times of profound global change that involve the entire world and that give rise to uncertainty and unease as to the future. In this context, it is a challenge for us to give new substance to our commitment and solidarity, leaving behind isolationist and individualist views of international relations or a memory of the past.

It is necessary, therefore, for there to be consensus as to the need to build international action in the field of cooperation and humanitarian assistance, on the basis of a joint effort by the international community.

In this sense, to proclaim the year 2000 as International Year of Thanksgiving — beyond the objective of highlighting once again the community of universal values that link the different peoples of the world — has a more profound meaning, insofar as the message of thanksgiving tends to alleviate the suffering and poverty resulting from natural disasters and warlike conflict through the search for equity and justice.

Likewise, we believe that this initiative will give future generations an opportunity to join in projects that strengthen international cooperation and share in cultural celebrations generating peace and reconciliation.

More than 50 years after the convening of the San Francisco Conference, we still have the same trust and hope in the work of the United Nations. We are convinced, moreover, that the process of reform the Organization is now undergoing, under the firm and well-reasoned stimulus of the Secretary-General, will lead to actions that will contribute to the development and progress of humanity.

In this context, the declaration of the year 2000 as International Year of Thanksgiving will provide a unique opportunity for us to come together again in the spirit which spurred the Organization's founders. It is this spirit that should guide our actions in order to realize the high ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

For all these reasons, we hope that draft resolution A/52//18 will be adopted.

**The Acting Chairman:** I now call on the representative of Japan to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.22.

**Mr. Owada** (Japan): It is my great honour to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.22 entitled "International Year of Volunteers, 2001".

The idea of an International Year of Volunteers originated in a policy forum, held jointly by the United Nations Volunteer Programme and the United Nations University in Japan in 1996, where I had the honour of being a keynote speaker. This initiative was subsequently endorsed by the 40 volunteer organizations attending the

Conference on International Volunteerism held in Washington, D.C., in May 1996. At the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council held in July this year, a draft resolution recommending that the General Assembly proclaim the year 2001 the International Year of Volunteers was submitted by 60 sponsoring countries, and was adopted as resolution 1997/44 at that session.

Volunteer service — the contributions that individuals make as non-profit and non-career activities to enhance the well-being of the less fortunate — has been a part of every civilization and society. Today, volunteers are active in a wide range of areas, including welfare, environment, education, human rights, and disaster relief, where efforts on a volunteer basis complement governmental activities in these fields at the grass-roots level. The need for volunteer efforts is greater now than ever before and likely to grow greater still. Yet, while the contribution of volunteers is vast, much of their work often goes unrecognized because it does not involve the payment of market wages and because it is often spontaneous, informal and unstructured.

In the field of activities of the United Nations, the United Nations Volunteers programme has, since its inauguration in 1971, been sending volunteers to serve in various areas such as development cooperation, humanitarian assistance and election support, responding to the needs of the international community and often complementing the work of United Nations agencies operating in these fields, while also extending support to volunteer activities in the international community. The programme plays a significant and valuable role that complements the activities of the United Nations as an integral part of them, and thereby increases the effectiveness of the activities of the United Nations as a whole. As it is the sole organization in the United Nations system with a mandate to act as promoter of volunteerism, international support to the United Nations Volunteer Programme should be further intensified.

The Government of Japan believes that the proclamation of an International Year of Volunteers would extend recognition and give increased legitimacy to volunteering, and as a result would expand significantly the number of people willing to offer their services. We believe that the year 2001, the opening year of the new century, will be a most auspicious moment to assess past achievements and give volunteer activities fresh encouragement. I wish to express the hope that all Member States will reaffirm and support the efforts of volunteers to contribute to the health and well-being of people everywhere, and endorse the draft resolution proclaiming the International Year of Volunteers at this fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

The specific objectives of the Year would be to encourage increased recognition, facilitation, networking and promotion of volunteer service. As the forms and status of volunteering vary by country and by region, the International Year of Volunteers would be engendered from the locality and grassroots upward, and would not take the form of a world summit on volunteerism. Under our draft resolution, the United Nations Volunteer Programme will be designated as the focal point for the promotion of the Year in the United Nations system; the Programme can offer useful service as a facilitator in preparing for and implementing the Year, in close collaboration with Governments, the United Nations system and civil society.

The Assembly has before it two draft resolutions proclaiming the year 2001 the International Year of Volunteers. As a matter of procedure, the Secretariat distributed draft resolution A/52/L.21, which has the same content as the resolution adopted at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council last July. However, there are 123 sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.22; in addition to those countries mentioned in it, they now include Barbados, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Liberia, Nepal, Norway, Mali, Paraguay, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uruguay. All of them have become sponsors after the submission of the draft resolution, and would like to propose that action be taken only on A/52/L.22, the shorter version of the draft resolution. Draft resolution A/52/L.22 represents the result of efforts by the sponsors to avoid the repetition of adopting in the General Assembly a draft resolution with precisely the same content as the resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council. Accordingly, A/52/L.21 can be seen as a reference to A/52/L.22. I hope that this proposal of the sponsors, guided by the spirit of desiring to rationalize the work of the General Assembly, will be accepted in that spirit by all Member States.

**The Acting President**: In view of the statement by the representative of Japan, may I take it that the General Assembly decides not to take action on draft resolution A/52/L.21?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/52/L.15, L.18 and L.22, one by one.

We turn first to draft resolution A/52/L.15, entitled "Proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.15?

*Draft resolution A/52/L.15 was adopted* (resolution 52/15).

**The Acting President**: We turn next to draft resolution A/52/L.18, entitled "Year 2000: International Year of Thanksgiving".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.18?

*Draft resolution A/52/L.18 was adopted* (resolution 52/16).

**The Acting President**: We now turn to draft resolution A/52/L.22, entitled "International Year of Volunteers, 2001".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/52/L.22?

*Draft resolution A/52/L.22 was adopted* (resolution 52/17).

**The Acting President**: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 12.

**Agenda item 17**

**Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments**

**Reports of the Fifth Committee**

**The Acting President**: In view of recent developments pertaining to sub-item (e), "Appointment of members of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal", the consideration of that sub-item is postponed to a later date to be announced.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee which are before the Assembly today.

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President**: Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

**(a) Appointment of members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/670)**

**The Acting President**: The Fifth Committee recommends in paragraph 8 of its report that the General Assembly should appoint the following persons as members of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 1998: Mr. Ioan Barac, Mr. Hasan Jawarneh, Mr. Mahamane Amadou Maiga, Mr. E. Besley Maycock and Mr. C. S. M. Mselle.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to appoint those persons?

*It was so decided.*

**(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/671)**

**The Acting President**: In paragraph 7 of the report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should appoint the following persons as members of the Committee on Contributions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 1998: Mr. Uldis Blukis, Mr. David Etuket, Mr. Ihor V. Humenny, Mr. David Leis, Mr. Prakash Shah and Mr. Kazuo Watanabe.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to appoint the persons recommended above?

*It was so decided.*

**(c) Appointment of a member of the Board of Auditors**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/672)**

**The Acting President**: In paragraph 4 of the report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should appoint the Comptroller and Auditor-General of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as a member of the United Nations Board of Auditors for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 July 1998.

May I take it that the Assembly wishes to appoint this person?

*It was so decided.*

**(d) Confirmation of the appointment of members of the Investments Committee**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/673)**

**The Acting President**: The Fifth Committee, in paragraph 4 of its report, recommends that the General Assembly should confirm the appointment by the Secretary-General of the following persons as members of the Investments Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 1998: Mr. Ahmad Abdullatif, Mr. Fernando Chico Pardo and Mr. J. Y. Pillay.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to confirm the appointment of those persons?

*It was so decided.*

**(f) Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/675)**

**The Acting President:** In paragraph 5 of the report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should appoint the following persons as members of the International Civil Service Commission for a four-year term of office beginning on 1 January 1998: Mr. Mario Bettati, Mr. Joao Augusto de Medicis, Ms. Lucretia Myers, Mr. Alexis Stephanou and Mr. Ku Tashiro.

In the same paragraph, the Fifth Committee also recommends that the General Assembly should appoint Mr. Alexei Fedotov to fill the remainder of a four-year term of office expiring on 31 December 2000.

May I take it that the General Assembly appoints these persons?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President**: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (a) to (d) and sub-item (f) of agenda item 17?

*It was so decided.*

**(g) Appointment of members and alternate members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee**

**Report of the Fifth Committee (A/52/676)**

**The Acting President**: In paragraph 5 of the report, the Fifth Committee recommends that the General Assembly should appoint the following persons as members of the United Nations Staff Pension Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 1998: Mr. Tadanori Inomata, Mr. Gerhard Kuntzle, Mr. Vladimir V. Kuznetsov, Mr. Philip Richard Okanda Owade, Mr. Carlos Dante Riva and Ms. Susan Shearouse.

May I take it that the General Assembly appoints these persons?

*It was so decided.*

**The Acting President:** The Fifth Committee also decided to postpone to a later meeting the remaining two appointments, from the group of African States and the group of Asian States, respectively.

We have concluded this stage of our consideration of sub-item (g) of agenda item 17.

**Agenda item 34**

**Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization**

**Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/313)**

**Draft resolution (A/52/L.20)**

**The Acting President:** I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to introduce draft resolution A/52/L.20.

**Mr. Asadi** (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me first express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/52/313, which was prepared in response to paragraph 7 of resolution 51/21 of 27 November 1996. It is a very good, interesting and informative report, which renders it unnecessary for me to go into details.

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to regional cooperation. We believe that the current trend towards strengthening regional cooperation will certainly contribute not only to the well-being of the people of regional countries but also to the growth of the world economy. From our perspective, the United Nations in its entirety, and its specialized agencies and funds and programmes in particular, can indeed play a very active and constructive role in this regard. The United Nations system can, *inter alia*, contribute to identifying areas of, and exploring potential for, subregional, regional and interregional cooperation. The important and valuable activities currently being undertaken in this regard by the regional commissions deserve to be commended. In this particular connection, the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes and supports the efforts of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in promoting cooperation between major subregional organizations in Asia and the Pacific, including the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). The third consultative meeting of the heads of ECO, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was coordinated by ESCAP and held at Tehran, Iran, constitutes a prominent example of the effective contribution of regional commissions to the promotion of regional-development cooperation.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as one of the founders of the Economic Cooperation Organization, which comprises 10 countries from West, South and Central Asia and the Caucasus, spares no efforts for the realization of ECO objectives. As host to the ECO headquarters in Tehran, Iran continues to contribute to the strengthening and expanding of ECO's role and activities in various fields, in accordance with the development policies and priorities of its member States. We are happy to note that ECO has been able to register impressive achievements in such varied fields as communications, land, sea and air transportation, networks of transnational oil and gas pipelines, energy, trade, exchange of information and human-resource development.

Development of infrastructure in the ECO region is considered a vital area for enhanced regional economic cooperation. Transport and communications, along with energy and water supplies, are of particular importance to ECO members. With the inauguration in 1996 of the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railroad linking Iran and Turkmenistan the long-cherished dream of access to free waters by the landlocked countries of Central Asia finally came true. This new facility opened a valuable window of opportunity to the Central Asian landlocked countries to embark on the expansion of their trade ties with the outside world through the Iranian nationwide railroad system, providing those countries with the shortest and most economical access to the major seaports of the Persian Gulf in the southern direction and to Europe in the western direction.

Cooperation between the United Nations and subregional and regional organizations, as recognized and encouraged by the Charter, is bound to have a positive impact not only on the daily lives of the peoples in the regions but also on the promotion of peace and stability at all levels. The Islamic Republic of Iran is fully cognizant of the multidimensional, positive impact of regional economic cooperation and also of the constructive role of the United Nations system in this process. We support the current cooperation between the United Nations and ECO and encourage the relevant United Nations bodies, agencies, funds and programmes to strengthen further their consultation, cooperation and coordination with ECO in various fields and areas. Higher and better utilization of the enormous potentialities in the ECO region in different fields and areas will certainly be beneficial, both within and outside the region.

I should now like to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/52/L.20 and to point out a number of changes, which I shall present orally at the end of my introduction.

Representing the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the current coordinator of the ECO contact group in New York, I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly, on behalf of its sponsors the draft resolution under the agenda item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization". The report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the agenda item under consideration shows that cooperation between the United Nations and ECO has evolved in a satisfactory manner and presents a very promising outlook. Optimal utilization of the existing potentialities in the ECO region in various fields and areas will indeed be much facilitated and rendered more efficient and effective through the assistance of the United Nations system, in particular its specialized agencies involved in the field of operational activities.

Draft resolution A/52/L.20 is, as a matter of fact, an updated version of a similar resolution adopted by the General Assembly last year, with, of course, a few additions. It reflects the state of cooperation between the two organizations. While laying out the background of that cooperation and taking stock of the achievements so far, the draft resolution is also forward-looking in its approach to the future.

Addressing the future of a positively evolving relationship between the United Nations and ECO, the draft resolution spells out the areas of general cooperation with the United Nations system and also puts forward a number of areas of priority for ECO and its member States. I shall underline just a few of the salient points in this regard.

The draft resolution invites the Secretary-General of the United Nations to continue his efforts, in consultation with his ECO counterpart, to promote and expand cooperation and coordination between the two organizations. It urges the United Nations specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the system to continue and increase consultations and cooperation with ECO. It invites relevant international financial institutions to give appropriate consideration to ECO's projects and programmes, including those in the ECO priority areas of transport and communications, and it invites ESCAP to play a more active role in promoting cooperation with ECO.

I should now, on behalf of the sponsors, like to indicate some changes to the text, which I shall present orally.

In the second line of the fourth preambular paragraph, which begins "Bearing in mind," the year "1997" should be corrected to "1977", and the year "1977" farther along in that line should be changed to "1996".

In paragraph 6, the words "Calls upon" at the beginning of the paragraph should be replaced with the word "Invites". In the second line of the same paragraph, the first word, "favourable," should be replaced with the word "appropriate".

Lastly, in paragraph 8, line 5, the words "inter alia" should be inserted after the words "technical assistance".

To conclude, let me just add on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/52/L.20, as orally amended, that this draft resolution represents a humble effort on the part of a dynamic regional organization in a sensitive area of the world. It reflects the dedication of ECO to the further promotion of regional cooperation and the attainment of higher levels of economic well-being and development for its member States and the region at large.

Having said that, on behalf of the sponsors, I invite the General Assembly to adopt by consensus the draft resolution contained in document A/52/L.20, as orally amended, as the Assembly did in the case of a similar draft resolution last year.

**The Acting President:** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/2 of 13 October 1993, I now call on the Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Mr. Onder Ozar.

**Mr. Ozar** (Economic Cooperation Organization): As the Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), it is my privilege and honour to address this body on an agenda item which is of vital importance for the member States of our organization.

The Economic Cooperation Organization is a regional grouping devoted to the socio-economic well-being of its 10 member States, which are located in a region that encompasses more than 7 million square kilometres and is inhabited by nearly 320 million people. In this richly endowed region, ECO is playing a pivotal role to promote economic cooperation among member countries and provide the framework for an infrastructural network connecting the newly independent Republics of Central Asia and Azerbaijan to the rest of

the world through the road, maritime and air links of the neighbouring countries: Iran, Pakistan and Turkey.

I would like to inform representatives that soon after its expansion in November 1992 from three to 10 member States, ECO embarked upon a comprehensive restructuring and reorganization. Two plans of action were adopted in 1993, namely the Quetta Plan of Action and the Istanbul Declaration, both stipulating concrete targets to be achieved in the next 10 years, as well as a project-oriented Almaty Outline Plan for the Development of Transport Sector in the ECO Region. Lately, at the Fourth ECO Summit Meeting in Ashgabat in May 1996, an overall strategy for the ECO region and several documents on the reorganization and restructuring of ECO were adopted. Moreover, steps have been taken to establish regional institutions. Currently, ECO is in the process of implementing those decisions.

So as to pursue our objectives in a coordinated manner and in harmony with the global trends, we are working closely with the United Nations and its specialized agencies towards the attainment of our common objectives in the ECO region. ECO acquired observer status at the United Nations on 13 October 1993 through resolution 48/2. Cooperation between the United Nations and ECO has been further strengthened through the adoption of resolutions 50/1 and 51/21, adopted respectively on 12 October 1995 and 27 November 1996. These resolutions are helping to facilitate and strengthen ECO's relations with the major agencies of the United Nations system. We have established cooperative relationships with several United Nations agencies and funds and programmes that are now carrying out joint activities with ECO. They include the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). ECO has jointly held three important conferences with UNFPA and four workshops with UNICEF. Our cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has also grown considerably and is expanding. Currently, several projects are being carried out jointly. UNDCP has also worked out a project proposal to assist in the implementation of ECO's plan on drug control. Similarly, UNDP is preparing a study on the economies and resource complementarities of ECO member States, a draft of which has already been circulated among member States. The holding of a workshop, with the participation of UNDP, to discuss the outcome of this study is under consideration. Also, another study on enhancing the effectiveness of the new wing of the ECO secretariat comprising research and project units has been carried out by a UNDP senior consultant. We are grateful to have received the working draft of this study, which has been circulated among member States for consideration.

In view of the growing trend towards interregional cooperation, ECO is also part of an annual consultative process with Asia's major subregional organizations, which is coordinated by ESCAP. The third consultative meeting of the heads of these organizations was held in Tehran last May. Details of these joint efforts of ECO and United Nations agencies are reflected in good measure in the report of the Secretary-General of 29 August 1997, which is contained in document A/52/313 and has been submitted under the present agenda item.

In my view, we have now reached a stage where we need to evolve a joint strategy for closer cooperation and coordination between ECO and the United Nations agencies to pursue the optimum utilization of opportunities offered by the vast human and resource potential of the ECO region. The draft resolution submitted under this agenda item reflects this need and also provides a number of proposals and guidelines for future courses of action. I seek the cooperation of all members in supporting the draft resolution that is before the General Assembly, which, among other things, calls upon the relevant international financial institutions to give favourable consideration to helping to implement regional infrastructural plans and projects, including ECO programmes spelt out in the important Declaration adopted at the Extraordinary Summit Meeting held in Ashgabat in May 1997. That Declaration, *inter alia*, provides for the establishment of a comprehensive transport and communications infrastructure and a network of transnational oil and gas pipelines in the ECO region. In fact, this programme aims at providing the landlocked countries in the region with greater mobility to promote interregional trade and to establish mutually beneficial economic and commercial interaction with other regions for greater cooperation between the two organizations in the years ahead.

Before I conclude my statement, I wish to thank Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for extending his full cooperation to our organization in promoting our shared aims and economic development objectives in the region. Let me also express our earnest hope that the cooperation between the United

Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization will further expand and strengthen in various fields and areas, *inter alia*, through effective liaison between the two organizations.

I wish the General Assembly every success in its deliberations.

**The Acting President:** At the request of the sponsors, action on draft resolution A/52/L.20 is postponed until tomorrow morning.

**Programme of work**

*The President in the Chair.*

**The President:** I should like to make an announcement concerning agenda item 20, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", which is scheduled to be taken up next week, on Monday, 24 November, in the morning.

The Assembly will consider agenda item 20 together with its sub-items, with the exception of sub-item (c) on "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan". Sub-item (c) will be considered together with agenda item 43 at a later date.

In view of the large number of draft resolutions expected under this item and of the possible need to hold consultations on them with a view to reaching consensus, I would urge members to submit those draft resolutions as soon as possible, and in any event not later than Monday, 1 December. In this regard, I should like to inform members that the next meeting of the informal consultations on this item will take place next week, on Wednesday, 26 November, in the morning, in Conference Room 8.

*The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.*